

[4910-13-U]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39 [66 FR 2212 1/11/2001]

[Docket No. 2000-CE-82-AD; Amendment 39-12069; AD 2000-26-19]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; SOCATA - Groupe AEROSPATIALE Model TBM 700 Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD) that applies to certain SOCATA - Groupe AEROSPATIALE (Socata) Model TBM 700 airplanes. This AD requires you to inspect for a low point in the fuel tank air vent valve hose; and reroute the hose as necessary. This AD is the result of mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI) issued by the airworthiness authority for France. The actions specified by this AD are intended to prevent in-flight damage to the wing skins caused by abnormal venting conditions of the wing fuel tank, which could result in severe handling problems or reduced structural capability. Continued operation with such structural deformation or handling problems could result in loss of control of the airplane.

**DATES:** This AD becomes effective on February 2, 2001.

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulation as of February 2, 2001.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) must receive any comments on this rule by February 15, 2001.

**ADDRESSES:** Send three copies of comments to FAA, Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2000-CE-82-AD, 901 Locust, Room 506, Kansas City, Missouri 64106.

You may get service information referenced in this AD from SOCATA Groupe AEROSPATIALE, Customer Support, Aerodrome Tarbes-Ossun-Lourdes, BP 930 - F65009 Tarbes Cedex, France; telephone: (33) (0)5.62.41.73.00; facsimile: (33) (0)5.62.41.76.54; or the Product Support Manager, SOCATA - Groupe AEROSPATIALE, North Perry Airport, 7501 Pembroke Road, Pembroke Pines, Florida 33023; telephone: (954) 894-1160; facsimile: (954) 964-4191. You may read this information at FAA, Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2000-CE-82-AD, 901 Locust, Room 506, Kansas City, Missouri 64106; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW, suite 700, Washington, DC.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Karl Schletzbaum, Aerospace Engineer, FAA, Small Airplane Directorate, 901 Locust, Room 301, Kansas City, Missouri 64106; telephone: (816) 329-4146; facsimile: (816) 329-4090.

## SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

### Discussion

**What events have caused this AD?** The Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC), which is the airworthiness authority for France, recently notified FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on certain Socata Model TBM 700 airplanes. The DGAC reports two occurrences on Socata Model TBM 700 airplanes of abnormal venting conditions of the wing fuel tank.

One occurrence was where an airplane experienced leaking during refueling. Inspection revealed the wing skin had come apart from the rib breaking the sealer, allowing the fuel to leak.

Another reported occurrence was in-flight where the pilot saw a wing skin deformation. These occurrences are caused by low pressure resulting from a misrouted fuel tank air vent valve hose and the fuel tank vent not operating.

**What are the consequences if the condition is not corrected?** This condition, if not corrected, could result in severe handling problems or reduced structural capability. Continued operation with such structural deformation or handling problems could result in loss of control of the airplane.

**Is there service information that applies to this subject?** Socata has issued Service Bulletin SB 70-088, dated November 2000. This service bulletin includes procedures for:

- inspecting for a low point in the fuel tank air vent valve hose; and
- rerouting the hose as necessary.

**What action did DGAC take?** The DGAC classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued French AD T2000-545(A), dated December 20, 2000, to ensure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in France.

**Was this in accordance with the bilateral airworthiness agreement?** These airplane models are manufactured in France and are type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of section 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.29) and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement.

In carrying out this bilateral airworthiness agreement, the DGAC has kept FAA informed of the situation described above.

### The FAA's Determination and an Explanation of the Provisions of the AD

**What has FAA decided?** The FAA has examined the findings of the DGAC; reviewed all available information, including the service information referenced above; and determined that:

- the unsafe condition referenced in this document exists or could develop on other Socata Model TBM 700 airplanes of the same type design;
- the actions specified in the previously-referenced service information (as specified in this AD) should be accomplished on the affected airplanes; and
- AD action should be taken in order to correct this unsafe condition.

**What does this AD require?** This AD requires you to do the actions previously specified in accordance with Socata Service Bulletin SB 70-088, dated November 2000.

**Will I have the opportunity to comment prior to the issuance of the rule?** Because the unsafe condition described in this document could result in structural failure with possible loss of control of the airplane, FAA finds that notice and opportunity for public prior comment are impracticable. Therefore, good cause exists for making this amendment effective in less than 30 days.

### Comments Invited

**How do I comment on this AD?** Although this action is in the form of a final rule and was not preceded by notice and opportunity for public comment, we invite your comments on the rule. You may send whatever written data, views, or arguments you choose. You need to include the rule's docket number and send three copies of your comments to the address specified under the caption "ADDRESSES." We will consider all comments received by the closing date specified above. We may change this rule in light of comments

received. Factual information that supports your ideas and suggestions is extremely helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of the AD action and determining whether we need to take additional rulemaking action.

**Are there any specific portions of the AD I should pay attention to?** The FAA specifically invites comments on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the rule that might require a change to the rule. You may look at all comments we receive. We will file a report in the Rules Docket that summarizes each FAA contact with the public that concerns the substantive parts of this proposal.

We are reviewing the writing style we currently use in regulatory documents, in response to the Presidential memorandum of June 1, 1998. That memorandum requires federal agencies to communicate more clearly with the public. We are interested in your comments on whether the style of this document is clear, and any other suggestions you might have to improve the clarity of FAA communications that affect you. You can get more information about the Presidential memorandum and the plain language initiative at <http://www.plainlanguage.gov>.

**How can I be sure FAA receives my comment?** If you want us to acknowledge the receipt of your comments, you must include a self-addressed, stamped postcard. On the postcard, write "Comments to Docket No. 2000-CE-82-AD." We will date stamp and mail the postcard back to you.

### **Regulatory Impact**

**Does this AD impact various entities?** These regulations will not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Therefore, FAA has determined that this final rule does not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132.

**Does this AD involve a significant rule or regulatory action?** The FAA has determined that this regulation is an emergency regulation that must be issued immediately to correct an unsafe condition in aircraft, and is not a significant regulatory action under Executive Order 12866. It has been determined further that this action involves an emergency regulation under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979). If it is determined that this emergency regulation otherwise would be significant under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures, a final regulatory evaluation will be prepared and placed in the Rules Docket (otherwise, an evaluation is not required). A copy of it, if filed, may be obtained from the Rules Docket.

### **List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39**

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by Reference, Safety.

### **Adoption of the Amendment**

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration amends part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) as follows:

#### **PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES**

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

#### **§ 39.13 [Amended]**

2. FAA amends § 39.13 by adding a new airworthiness directive (AD) to read as follows:

# AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVE



Aircraft Certification Service  
Washington, DC

U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

*We post ADs on the internet at "av-info.faa.gov"*

The following Airworthiness Directive issued by the Federal Aviation Administration in accordance with the provisions of Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 39, applies to an aircraft model of which our records indicate you may be the registered owner. Airworthiness Directives affect aviation safety and are regulations which require immediate attention. You are cautioned that no person may operate an aircraft to which an Airworthiness Directive applies, except in accordance with the requirements of the Airworthiness Directive (reference 14 CFR part 39, subpart 39.3).

**2000-26-19 SOCATA - GROUPE AEROSPATIALE:** Amendment 39-12069;  
Docket No. 2000-CE-82-AD.

(a) What airplanes are affected by this AD? This AD affects Model TBM 700 airplanes, serial numbers 1 through 182, that are certificated in any category.

(b) Who must comply with this AD? Anyone who wishes to operate any of the above airplanes must comply with this AD.

(c) What problem does this AD address? The actions specified by this AD are intended to prevent in-flight damage to the wing skins caused by abnormal venting conditions of the wing fuel tank, which could result in severe handling problems or reduced structural capability. Continued operation with such structural deformation could result in loss of control of the airplane.

(d) What must I do to address this problem? To address this problem, unless already done, you must do the following actions:

Action	Compliance Time	Procedures
(1) Inspect for a low point in the fuel tank air vent valve hose.	Within the next 5 hours time-in-service (TIS) after February 2, 2001 (the effective date of this AD).	Do this action following the ACCOMPLISHMENT INSTRUCTIONS paragraph in Socata Service Bulletin SB 70-088, dated November 2000, and the applicable maintenance manual.
(2) If there is a low point in the fuel tank air vent valve hose, reroute the hose.	Before further flight after the inspection.	Do this action following the ACCOMPLISHMENT INSTRUCTIONS paragraph in Socata Service Bulletin SB 70-088, dated November 2000, and the applicable maintenance manual.

(e) Can I comply with this AD in any other way? You may use an alternative method of compliance or adjust the compliance time if:

(1) Your alternative method of compliance provides an equivalent level of safety; and

(2) The Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, approves your alternative. Send your request through an FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Small Airplane Directorate.

Note 1: This AD applies to each airplane identified in paragraph (a) of this AD, regardless of whether it has been modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For airplanes that have been modified, altered, or repaired so that the performance of the requirements of this AD is affected, the owner/operator must request approval for an alternative method of compliance in accordance with paragraph (e) of this AD. The request should include an assessment of the effect of the modification, alteration, or repair on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD; and, if you have not eliminated the unsafe condition, specific actions you propose to address it.

(f) Where can I get information about any already-approved alternative methods of compliance?  
Contact Karl Schletzbaum, Aerospace Engineer, FAA, Small Airplane Directorate, 901 Locust, Room 301, Kansas City, Missouri 64106; telephone: (816) 329-4146; facsimile: (816) 329-4090.

(g) What if I need to fly the airplane to another location to comply with this AD? The FAA can issue a special flight permit under sections 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate your airplane to a location where you can accomplish the requirements of this AD.

(h) Are any service bulletins incorporated into this AD by reference? Actions required by this AD must be done following Socata Service Bulletin 70-088, dated November 2000. The Director of the Federal Register approved this incorporation by reference under 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51. You can get copies from SOCATA Groupe AEROSPATIALE, Customer Support, Aerodrome Tarbes-Ossun-Lourdes, BP 930 - F65009 Tarbes Cedex, France; or the Product Support Manager, SOCATA - Groupe AEROSPATIALE, North Perry Airport, 7501 Pembroke Road, Pembroke Pines, Florida 33023. You can look at copies at FAA, Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, 901 Locust, Room 506, Kansas City, Missouri, or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW, suite 700, Washington, DC .

(i) When does this amendment become effective? This amendment becomes effective on February 2, 2001.

Note 2: The subject of this AD is addressed in French AD T2000-545(A), dated December 20, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Karl Schletzbaum, Aerospace Engineer, FAA, Small Airplane Directorate, 901 Locust, Room 301, Kansas City, Missouri 64106; telephone: (816) 329-4146; facsimile: (816) 329-4090.

Issued in Kansas City, Missouri, on December 29, 2000.

David R. Showers, Acting Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.